

20 AUG 1976

MEMORANDUM FOR: Chief, Management and Assessment Staff, DDA

FROM :
Acting Director of Training

SUBJECT : ADMAG Recommended Objective for FY 1977
Regarding Accreditation for Selected
Agency Training Courses

1. We have reviewed the proposed ADMAG objective to seek accreditation for selected Agency training courses and offer the following in response.

2. Before commenting on the substance of the proposal, I would like to distinguish between cooperating with specific colleges and universities who are willing to grant credit for certain Agency training courses and the seeking of accreditation for Agency training courses by an accrediting body such as the American Council on Education. The first is already being done. This, we believe, largely obviates the need for the second course of action which also would present some real problems.

3. Accreditation for training courses is awarded by an accrediting body after a thorough review of the course content, the method and quality of instruction, and the qualifications of the instructors. This review often involves a visit to the locations of the training and always includes a discussion with those responsible for course development and administration. At the conclusion of the investigation, the accrediting body certifies that the course of instruction reviewed merits a certain number of college credits or fails to pass muster.

4. The Office of Training does not feel that the intent of the proposed objective is feasible for several reasons. First, the content of most courses is classified and to achieve accreditation for any of our courses, we would have to reveal information not only about the course itself, but also about the people who teach and administer

it. This would require either avoiding the classified elements--an awkward approach--or clearing the accrediting officers. Second, many OTR courses depend heavily on the use of guest lecturers rather than the OTR instructors; the variation which results would make accreditation difficult if not impossible.

5. When the subject of accreditation was discussed at a recent meeting of the Civil Service Commission's Interagency Advisory Group on Training, the Director of the Civil Service Commission Bureau of Training, Mr. James Beck, cautioned those present "to go very slowly in this area." He reminded them that "in-house training is for the benefit of the Federal Government and not the employee." Mr. Beck went on to say that equivalency training should be confined to skill courses which are graded or measured in some way. With this guidance in mind, we feel that only our language courses could be recommended for accreditation.

6. The Office of Training does, however, cooperate with employees who are seeking to have courses accepted for credit at specific colleges or universities. In such cases, OTR will provide, where possible, an unclassified description of the course for which credit is being sought and an indication of its length and method of instruction. Attached for your information is a copy of a paper outlining OTR's policy toward providing such information to academic institutions and a listing of approved course descriptions. In order to minimize the administrative impact on OTR, the paper was not widely publicized at the time of its approval in April 1975, although since then approximately 20 employees have asked that OTR verify to academic institutions their completion of some 62 training courses. The listing of approved courses and course descriptions is currently being updated to bring it in line with OTR's present curriculum.

7. In sum, OTR believes that it is impractical and unnecessary to pursue a formal program to obtain accreditation of Agency training courses from an accrediting body and recommends against adopting the objective. We would, however, continue to follow the existing procedure for seeking credit for training courses on an individual basis. We hope that the ADMAG will recognize that this procedure goes far toward meeting the purpose of the proposed objective.



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Attachment

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